

What is The Other Talk?

People normally associate 'The Talk' with a conversation about sex, consent and relationships.

But there is another important talk that every family should have.

'The Other Talk' - an open conversation about alcohol and other drugs - is an important part of preparing a young person for situations where they may be around alcohol and other drugs.

You can start this conversation from as early as eight years old, to give them the right information and attitudes before they go to high school.

In fact, broaching this topic early means you can establish an understanding that there are no silly questions and no off-limit topics.



Getting Started

1. Get the facts

To get the facts you need, use proven sources about alcohol and other drugs, like these pages, the ADF's drugs facts page (adf.org.au/drug-facts/), and the Positive Choices' Parent Booklet (positivechoices.org.au/parents/drug-education-parent-booklet), so that you can help your young person with the most accurate information.

2. Be clear about your own beliefs

Get clear about your views on the use of alcohol and other drugs. For example, it's up to you whether your under 18 is allowed to drink alcohol or not.

To help you make this decision, check out the Australian alcohol guidelines (nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol). They state that the safest option for people under 18 is not to drink.⁸

3. Stay calm

Keep things casual and relaxed. You could use media stories, social media posts or themes from popular movies or TV shows as a prompt to start a chat. Try to have the conversation in a quiet spot or when you're doing something together, like driving or making a meal. Remember, there's no limit to the number of conversations you can have.

4. Avoid judging or lecturing

Find out what your young person thinks about alcohol and other drugs. Ask what they'd do in different situations and listen to their opinions. Remain open and keep your body language and tone respectful - this can go a long way to encourage an open conversation.

Most importantly, listen to their opinions and ensure your young person knows they can talk to you about any concerns they have; at any time.⁹

5. Focus on their health

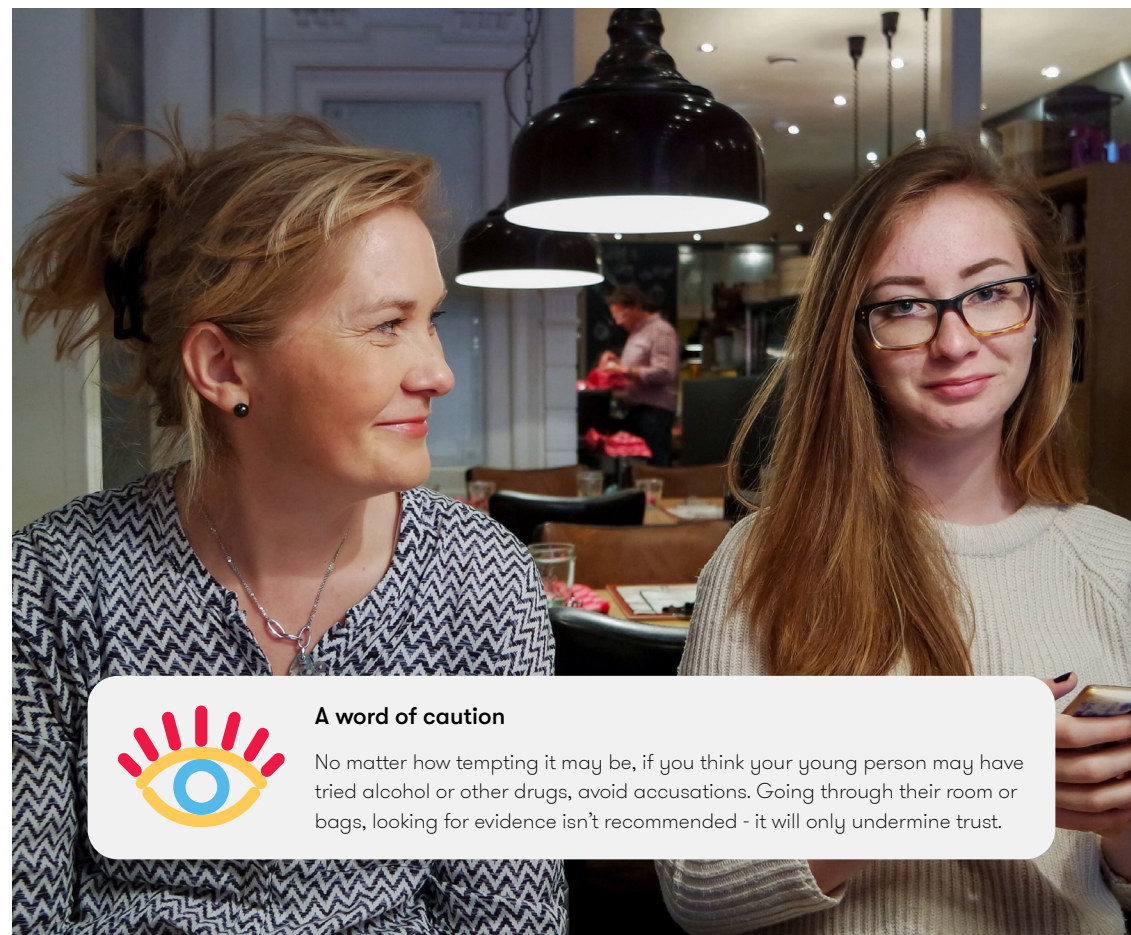
Focus on how you care about them and want them to be healthy. Don't use exaggerated statements about the dangers as it will make you appear less knowledgeable. Talk about why people may want to use alcohol and drugs as well as discussing the harms.

6. Set rules and consequences

Explain your views on alcohol and other drugs and use the facts to back them up. Establish clear rules and consequences for breaking them.

7. Help them to navigate tricky situations

Give your young person some strategies to help them get out of situations where they may feel pressured to use alcohol or other drugs. You could let them know that you are always available to pick them up if they are feeling uncomfortable. [More information on peer pressure and how to say no \(positivechoices.org.au/students/making-choices\)](https://positivechoices.org.au/students/making-choices).



A word of caution

No matter how tempting it may be, if you think your young person may have tried alcohol or other drugs, avoid accusations. Going through their room or bags, looking for evidence isn't recommended - it will only undermine trust.